



Request for Applications



RFA # 002-PDG-2020

TITLE: **Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Renewal Grant State-wide Birth to 3 Program Feasibility and Cost Study**

FUNDING AGENCY: NC DHHS/Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE)

ISSUE DATE: November 9, 2020

RECEIPT DEADLINE: Applications, subject to the following conditions, must be received no later than **5:00 pm December 9, 2020.**

EMAIL an electronic PDF of your application to the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education via this email: DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov.

The signature of an authorized official is required on the application face sheet. An electronic signature or an electronic scanned copy of the signed application face sheet will be accepted. **Only electronic application submissions via email will be accepted--i.e., do not mail, fax, or deliver copies of the application to DCDEE's physical or mailing address.**

INTENT TO APPLY: Eligible agencies and/or organizations interested in applying for this RFA are encouraged to notify DCDEE of their intent to apply via the following link, https://northhealth.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8FYLRtpSD7iTOWl no later than **5:00 pm November 23, 2020**. Agencies are **not** required to notify of their intent to respond to this RFA; this information is requested to assist DCDEE in planning.

DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES concerning this RFA in writing to:

Tilneil Gary, PDG Grant Manager

Email address: DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov

Sharon Johnson, PDG Contracts Manager

Email address: DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov

IMPORTANT NOTE: Questions concerning the specifications, or any information contained within this Request for Application (RFA) must be received no later than **5:00 pm November 23, 2020**. All questions must be received in writing, via electronic mail to: DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov. Responses to all questions received by the deadline will be posted on the Division of Child Development and Early Education website <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Whats-New> no later than **5:00 pm December 1, 2020**.

ELIGIBILITY: This RFA is open to state agencies and universities, public and private nonprofit organizations with a current 501(c)(3) standing with knowledge of North's Carolina's early childhood education mixed delivery system and expertise in conducting research and presenting data, providing consultation to state and local government agencies/personnel, and providing analysis of emerging conditions and child well-being.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY: A contract will be awarded from this RFA over an 18-month period of funding beginning with an estimated start date of January 15, 2021, through June 30, 2022. Up to \$750,000 may be available over the 18-month period depending on the availability of carry forward and continuation funds. Should a carry forward option be granted to DCDEE by the federal funder, the same option will be available to the contractor.

This RFA will fund the development of a feasibility and cost study to establish a statewide companion program to NC Pre-K, that will serve low-income and at-risk children birth to age three.

DCDEE will determine the actual funding amount based on the proposed execution of the project and the utilization of funds as outlined in the successful applicant's proposal, pending funding availability.

Preschool Development Grant B-5 Renewal Grant Funding Source:

1. Funding Type	Discretionary
2. Federal Award Identification Number (FAIN)	90TP0056-01-00
3. Federal Award Date (see § 200.39 Federal award date)	12/31/2019
4. Total Amount of the Federal Award (awarded to DCDEE)	\$13,414,500
5. Federal award project description, as required to be responsive to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)	PDG B-5 Renewal Grants seek to empower state governments to lead the way in leveraging federal, state, and local early care and education investments. Renewal grants will assist states in helping low-income and disadvantaged children to enter kindergarten prepared to succeed. In addition, these grants will help improve the transitions between early care and education settings and elementary school. The overall responsibility of the PDG B-5 Renewal Grant is to assist states in the coordination of existing early childhood funding streams, resulting in services being provided to more

	children birth through five in a mixed delivery system.
6. Name of Federal awarding agency, pass-through entity, and contact information for awarding official	US DHHS Administration for Children and Families Office of Child Care NC DHHS/DCDEE 333 Six Forks Road Raleigh, North Carolina 27609
7. CFDA Number and Name; the pass-through entity must identify the dollar amount made available under each Federal award and the CFDA number at the time of disbursement	CFDA# 93.434 ESSA Preschool Development Grants Birth Through Five
8. Identification of whether the award is R&D	No

Federal Requirements on indirect cost rates and calculations according to 2 C.F.R. 200.414:

1. If your agency has or establishes a Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (FNIR), then the agency is not allowed to charge the “de minimis” rate of 10% (or some other amount) for indirect costs, as directed by 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).
2. Agencies with an FNIR are required to charge their agreed upon rate for their indirect costs and include cost items as determined by the FNIR in their indirect costs.
3. If your agency does not have and never had a FNIR, then your agency is allowed to negotiate a different rate or the “de minimis,” as per 2 C.F.R. 200.414(f).
4. Negotiation of indirect cost rates in excess of the “de minimis” rate of 10% are performed by the NC DHHS Office of the Controller, Cost Analysis and Administration section:

Cost Analysis/Federal Financial Reporting/Administration
DHHS Office of the Controller
NC Department of Health and Human Services
1050 Umstead Dr
Raleigh, NC 27699-2019
Phone: 919-855-3696

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I. INTRODUCTION

Extensive research on early brain development has informed the understanding that investments in infants and toddlers are critical, especially for very young children with high needs. According to Dr. James J. Heckman’s work with a group of economists, psychologists, statisticians, and neuroscientists, “early childhood development directly influences economic, health and social outcomes for individuals and society. Adverse early environments create deficits in skills and abilities that drive down productivity and increase social costs – thereby adding to financial deficits borne by the public.”

North Carolina has been recognized for the high-quality NC Pre-K program which shows positive educational outcomes for North Carolina’s four-year-old children identified as at-risk. Annual evaluations of the NC Pre-K program have shown consistently positive child outcomes for children enrolled in the program as reflected by higher scores on third grade End of Grade (EOG) tests than similar children who did not attend. Research shows that a higher level of quality and higher standards are necessary to achieve the kinds of educational outcomes exhibited in NC Pre K.

In 2018, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) developed a report on a separate star-rated license for birth through two years of age for the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services. A recommendation in this report was to conduct a feasibility and cost study for the development of a pilot program modeled after NC Pre-K for birth through age three classrooms.

II. BACKGROUND

North Carolina has made substantial investments in a high-quality NC Pre-K program with proven positive outcomes for participating children. North Carolina also has the experience to know that it takes time to develop a solid new program. Expanding access to high-quality infant-toddler care was a recommendation in North Carolina’s recent statewide B-5 Needs Assessment. State leaders are also interested in determining the feasibility of a large-scale high-quality early learning program for low-income and at-risk children ages birth through three — similar to what exists with NC Pre-K, which serves four-year-olds.

The landmark Leandro ruling reaffirmed North Carolina’s constitutional duty to ensure all children have the opportunity to receive a sound basic education. Subsequent rulings require North Carolina to identify specific resources needed to ensure that all children, including those who are at-risk or from rural and underserved communities, have access to a sound basic education, including access to early childhood education. Since the court issued the Leandro ruling in 1997 and the subsequent Hoke County Board of Education ruling in 2004, North Carolina has struggled to live up to this constitutional requirement.

The January 21, 2020, Leandro Consent Order and the subsequent June 15, 2020 Joint Report submitted to the court addresses the establishment of a system of early education that

provides access to high-quality pre-kindergarten and other early childhood learning opportunities. Included in the early childhood education priorities of the Leandro plan are action steps for North Carolina to “increase high-quality early learning opportunities for at-risk children from birth through age three,” including the implementation of a feasibility and cost study for a state model for high-quality early learning programs for birth through age three (comparable to the state model for high-quality NC Pre-K but appropriately designed for younger ages).

In December 2019, the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) was awarded funding through the [Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five](#) (PDG B-5) to implement activities to strengthen its early childhood education system.

North Carolina is using the PDG renewal period to carefully develop a scalable program developing actionable implementation plans and recommendations for a companion program to NC Pre-K. The program model will be designed to provide a high-quality comprehensive child development and family support program to assist low-income and at-risk children birth through age three achieve measurable short, mid, and long-term positive child outcomes. The program model will be designed to prioritize infants and toddlers most at risk for negative impacts of social determinants of health, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and for lower school readiness outcomes. The model will also address systemic barriers to accessing culturally responsive early care and education by developing equitable eligibility requirements, site qualifications and requirements, classroom environment and program requirements, teacher qualifications and compensation, and program evaluation and monitoring protocols.

DCDEE is seeking an entity that will:

1. Conduct a literature review to identify proven elements of high-quality birth through three infant-toddler to preschool and preschool to pre-k care and education services;
2. Identify any statewide programs currently available in the United States that support the transition of children as they age out of services including infant-toddler to preschool and preschool to pre-k programs;
3. Review data on the current quality of infant-toddler care in NC;
4. Determine the most impactful level of educator preparation for infant and toddler care and education using the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s Power to the Profession Unifying Framework;
5. Determine successful mixed delivery system and mixed classroom conditions needed for successful implementation;

6. Develop an operational transition plan for children and families as they move from this program to either another early care and education setting or kindergarten;
7. Develop a cost model and proposed phased financing approach utilizing state and federal resources;
8. Establish a state Infant-Toddler Task Force to help guide the work, consisting of program owners and operators, infant and toddler educators, representatives of families with infants and toddlers, researchers, and other early childhood and financing experts; and
9. Develop a legislative strategy to engage North Carolina legislators in understanding the importance of birth to age three development and reviewing and providing input on the study results.

Resources: An applicant may find the following resources linked below (and/or included as an attachment to this RFA) helpful in preparing a successful application narrative.

- The [PDG B-5 Renewal Grant Application](#) outlining planned projects for each of the six required activities, including Activity 5.2 Infant-Toddler Feasibility and Cost Study.
- The [PDG B-5 Needs Assessment](#)
- The [PDG B-5 Strategic Plan](#)
- The [North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan](#)
- The WestEd Leandro report "[Sound Basic Education for All: An Action Plan for North Carolina](#)"
- The January 21, 2020, Leandro Consent Order and the June 15, 2020, "Joint Report to the Court on Sound Basic Education for All: Fiscal Year 2021 Action Plan for North Carolina"
- The National Association for the Education of Young Children's [Power to the Profession Unifying Framework](#).
- The [North Carolina Pre-K Program Requirements and Guidance Manual](#) effective for the 2020 – 2021 state fiscal year
- NC Pre-K legislation reports, executive orders and plans including: [Study Costs and Effectiveness Associated with NC Pre-K Slots](#), [NC Pre-K Executive Order 100](#), and [NC Pre-K Compliance Plan in Accordance with Executive Order 100](#)

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

North Carolina proposes to conduct a study of the feasibility and costs for the development of a program designed to provide high-quality comprehensive child development and family support program to low-income at-risk children birth through age three and their families. Such a program would ensure children have a seamless birth through kindergarten early learning experience. The program model must use an equity lens to address child enrollment eligibility, site qualifications and requirements, classroom environment and program requirements, blended funding classrooms including private pay, teacher qualifications and commensurate compensation, and program evaluation and monitoring.

A. Feasibility Study

- i. *Literature Review* - Collect and analyze current literature and data on the following:
 1. Literature that identifies proven elements of high-quality early care and education for birth through age three, such as: use of a curriculum, child to teacher ratios, teacher education, family engagement, culturally competent caregiving practices, program standards, cost of high-quality care, program, classroom, and teacher assessment tools and developmental screening;
 2. Research of current birth through three programs in the United States to identify program elements that have been successfully implemented at scale; and
 3. Data on the current quality of infant-toddler care in North Carolina to include suspension and expulsion, capacity versus enrollment, geographic child care deserts and inequities in obtaining quality care.
- ii. *Report* - Summarize findings from literature review, data collection, and feasibility study in a report including:
 1. Elements of high-quality early care,
 2. Current status of infant-toddler quality in North Carolina, and
 3. Recommended and alternative options.

B. Cost Study

- i. *Market survey* - Conduct a market survey to determine the demand for infant-toddler care.
- ii. *Model Cost Analysis* - Identify efficacious models and associated costs for statewide implementation of effective models.
- iii. *Pilot and Scaled Program Design* - Develop a plan to pilot and scale the program.

C. Legislative Strategy

- i. Create a legislative strategy to engage North Carolina legislators in understanding the importance of birth through age three development.

D. Infant-Toddler Taskforce

- i. Establish a state-level Infant-Toddler Task Force which shall be responsible for providing feedback to the Contractor on critical decision points.
- ii. Facilitate quarterly meetings.

- iii. Ensure that the Infant-Toddler Taskforce consists of researchers, health/mental health practitioners, early childhood practitioners, partners and financing experts.

Timeline of Outputs:

- March 2021: Establish an Infant-Toddler Taskforce.
- March 2021 through June 2022: Host Quarterly Taskforce Convenings.
- October 2021: Submit Literature Review Findings.
- June 2022: Submit Program Model, Cost Analysis, and Plan for Statewide Implementation.
- June 2022: Submit Legislative Strategy.

IV. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. **Reports** – Provide data as requested by DCDEE to meet federal reporting requirements and as needed for the state’s B-5 Needs Assessment, B-5 Strategic Plan, or PDG Program Performance Evaluation. This includes submitting monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting by the deadlines provided by DCDEE in order to meet any submission date required from the federal funder.
2. **Feedback** – Providing feedback at least monthly to DCDEE is required throughout the duration of the grant to contribute to continuous quality improvement (CQI) and monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.

V. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS AND CAPACITY

Applicants must exhibit comprehensive knowledge of early childhood education (ECE) systems, effective policies and practices at all levels of the ECE infrastructure, a demonstrated ability to develop and execute equity focused projects, and program design and evaluation expertise. Applicants must be able to work effectively with a variety of ECE stakeholders, including state and local agencies. Preference will be given to applicants with extensive knowledge of the NC Early Childhood Action Plan and recent developments in Leandro vs. State of North Carolina case addressing early childhood education, such as the WestEd Leandro report, the Governor’s Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education recommendations, the January 21, 2020 Consent Order and the June 15, 2020 Joint Report. The submission of work products that demonstrate similar or relevant efforts are required.

VI. LINE ITEM BUDGET & NARRATIVE

The applicant will submit two line-item budgets--one for the work the applicant anticipates completing during the period of January 15, 2021, through December 31, 2021, and one for work the applicant anticipates completing during the period of January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022. The budgets must address the cost to complete deliverables outlined in this RFA. A narrative justification must be included for every expense listed in the budgets. Each justification should show how the amount on the line item budget was calculated, and it

should be clear how the expense relates to the project's activities. The total for the two budgets added together may not exceed \$750,000.

Travel Reimbursement Rates

Mileage reimbursement rates must be based on rates determined by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM). Because mileage rates fluctuate with the price of fuel, the OSBM will release the "Change in IRS Mileage Rate" memorandum to be found on OSBM's website when there is a change in this rate.

For other travel related expenses, please refer to the current rates for travel and lodging reimbursement, presented in the chart below. However, please be advised that reimbursement rates periodically change. DCDEE will only reimburse for rates authorized in OSBM's North Carolina Budget Manual or adopted by means of an OSBM Budget Memo. These documents are located here: https://www.osbm.nc.gov/budman5-travel-policies#TP5_1.

Current Rates for Travel and Lodging

Meals	In State	Out of State
Breakfast	\$8.60	\$8.60
Lunch	\$11.30	\$11.30
Dinner	\$19.50	\$22.20
<i>Total Meals Per Diem Per Day</i>	<i>\$39.40</i>	<i>\$42.10</i>
Lodging (<i>Maximum rate per person, excludes taxes and fees</i>)	\$75.10	\$88.70
Total Travel Allowance Per Day	\$114.50	\$130.80
Mileage	\$0.575 cents per mile	

VII. APPLICATION CONTENT & FORMAT

The submitted electronic application must be formatted to print on 8.5 x 11-inch paper with margins of 1 inch, except for the spreadsheets used in the budget template. Line spacing should be single-spaced. Use Calibri or Times New Roman font **only** no smaller than an 11-point font. All proposals must include the following (*** indicates form included in RFA posting**).

- 1) **Application Checklist***: Summarizes the application components to be submitted.
- 2) **Application Face Sheet***: Requires electronic or scanned signature of authorized authority.

- 3) **Proposal Summary:** Provides a brief (3-5 paragraphs) description of the activities the applicant proposes to implement.
- 4) **Introduction to the Applicant Organization/Applicant Qualifications:** Provides a 1-3-page introduction to the applicant's organization, including:
 - The organization's mission, history, and goals;
 - Qualifications, experience, and expertise of key personnel to be assigned to this initiative including up to three work samples; and
 - The organization's experience in the content area specified in the application.
- 5) **Proposal Design, Timeline & Strategies:** Provide a 5-7-page narrative describing the proposed project design and the activities/tasks as described in Section III that will be accomplished with the available resources. Include as part of the scope of services the major tasks, deliverables, and anticipated dates of completion. Identify the key personnel responsible for each task, by position.
- 6) **Collaborative Partners or Subcontractors:** Provide a 1-3-page narrative describing any collaborative partners or subcontractors the applicant plans to work with in the development of a feasibility and cost study. Include partner or subcontractor name, address, and nonprofit or for-profit status. Explain the contributions each partner or subcontractor will make toward this project, including resources. Attach copies of support letters from collaborative partners or subcontractors, if applicable. Requested attachments will not count toward the applicant's page limitations.
- 7) **Line Item Budget*, Detailed Budget Narrative, and FTE Sheet*:** Complete and submit two proposed line item budgets according to the format provided with this RFA. The budgets shall reflect the separate timeframes of January 15, 2021, through December 31, 2021, and January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022, and when added together do not exceed the total \$750,000 budget. Also complete a proposed budget narrative that explains in detail all line items in the budget worksheet in accordance with the "DCDEE Line Item Budget & Narrative Instructions." The FTE worksheet is also required as part of this RFA. Please complete the FTE sheet first so that the line item budget will populate Salary/Fringe values in Column C.

VIII. SELECTION PROCESS

The following is a general description of the process for selecting the application for funding for this initiative. A selection committee chosen by DCDEE will review each application submitted. Upon review of each application, the selection committee will assign a numerical rating based on the following:

- 1) **Proposal Summary** (Maximum of **10** points):
Response must reflect the applicant's understanding of and responsiveness to the Scope of Services described in Section III.
- 2) **Applicant Organization(s)/Applicant Qualifications/Partners** (Maximum of **20** points):
Response must reflect the applicant's history of and capacity for successful completion of developing equity focused plans and program design, as well as demonstrated expertise of North Carolina's early childhood education (ECE) mixed delivery system and ability to work effectively with a variety of ECE stakeholders. Collaborative partners or subcontractors, if used, should be qualified and have the capacity to provide the services specified.
- 3) **Proposal Design, Timeline & Strategies** (Maximum of **30** points):
Response must reflect how the proposal will allow for the successful development of a scalable program featuring actionable implementation plans and recommendations (as a companion program to NC Pre-K), designed to provide a high-quality comprehensive child development and family support program to assist low-income and at-risk children birth through age three achieve measurable short, mid, and long-term positive child outcomes. The criteria in Section III must be addressed. Include a timeline of deliverables for the timeframe of January 15, 2021, through December 31, 2021, and a timeline of deliverables for the timeframe of January 1, 2022 through June 30, 2022. The timelines should reflect the activities and strategies that will support completion of an equitable infant toddler early care and education model.
- 4) **Alignment with Year 1 PDG work and Current NC Early Childhood studies:** (Maximum of **15** points):
Plan must reflect how the project will align with North Carolina's PDG B-5 Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan completed in the initial phase of the planning grant, the NC Early Childhood Action Plan, and the Leandro early childhood education priorities. For more information on how to access these documents, see this list of resources outlined in Section II "Background" of this RFA.
- 5) **Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** (Maximum of **10** points):
Recognizing child outcomes vary disproportionately across race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical and developmental ability, and geography, the proposal must clearly demonstrate the applicant's ability to design and implement culturally responsive programming. The services provided by this contract (as well evidence of past work) shall include a focus of employing a diversity, equity and inclusion framework in project development and execution – to ensure the program that is developed is representative of and responsive to diverse identities of North Carolina families.
- 6) **Line Item Budget*, Detailed Budget Narrative and FTE Sheet*:** (Maximum of **15** points):
Budgets must reflect efficient and effective use of financial resources. The proposal must follow all stipulations included in the budget worksheet and narrative instructions. The

plan must provide a clear and reasonable justification for all proposed expenditures. Two budgets must be provided to show the funding needed for the period of January 15, 2021, through December 31, 2021, and the period of January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022. Should a no cost extension be granted to DCDEE by the federal funder to complete PDG activities, the same option will be available to the contractor.

Maximum Points: 100

Any attachments must further demonstrate the applicant's capacity to fulfill the requirements for this project as described. Attachments will not count against the applicant's page limitations. The selection committee will submit recommendations to DCDEE based on the selection process described. DCDEE will make a final selection and notify all applicants of that selection in writing and/or electronically **no later than 5:00 pm on December 11, 2020.**

IX. APPLICATION PROCUREMENT PROCESS

1. Written questions concerning the RFA specifications will be received until the date specified on the cover sheet of this RFA. A summary of all questions and answers will be posted to DCDEE's website (<http://ncchildcare.nc.gov/>) by **December 1, 2020.**
2. **An electronic submission** of the application must be received from each agency or organization. The submission must include an application face sheet with an electronic or scanned signature by an official authorized to bind the agency or organization in a legal contract.
3. All applications must be received by DCDEE via email no later than the date and time specified on the cover sheet of the RFA. **Paper copies or faxed applications will not be accepted.**
4. The date and time of application receipt will be documented by the date and time shown on the email submission received via DCDEE.PDGContracts.Unit.RFA@dhhs.nc.gov. Budgets and budget narratives are to be included as part of the application submitted.
5. At their option, the RFA evaluation team may request additional information from any or all applicants for clarification or to support the materials presented in any part of the application. However, agencies and organizations are cautioned that the RFA evaluation team is not required to request clarification; therefore, all applications should be complete and reflect the most favorable terms available from the agency or organization.
6. Applications will be evaluated according to completeness, content, and applicant's documented experience with similar projects, apparent ability of the agencies or organization's staff and cost. The award of a grant to one agency and organization does not mean that the other applications lacked merit but that, all facts considered, the selected application was deemed to provide the best service to the State.

7. Agencies and organizations are cautioned that this is a request for application, and the funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any and all applications when such rejections are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency.
8. **Application Process Summary Dates**
 - 11/9/2020: Request for Application issued.
 - 11/23/2020: All questions due via email no later than 5 pm.
 - 11/23/2020: Interested applicants submit **optional** Notice of Intent no later than 5 pm.
 - 12/01/2020: Answers to Questions posted to the DCDEE website no later than 5 pm.
 - 12/09/2020: Applications must be received via email no later than 5 pm.
 - 12/11/2020: Successful applicant will be notified.
 - 01/15/2021: Estimated contract start date.

X. GENERAL INFORMATION ON SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS

1. **Award or Rejection**

All complete and timely submitted applications will be evaluated and awards will be made to the agency or organization whose combination of budget and service capabilities are deemed to be in the best interest of the funding agency. The funding agency reserves the unqualified right to reject any or all offers if determined to be in its best interest. The successful applicant will be notified by December 11, 2020.
2. **Cost of Application Preparation**

Any cost incurred by an agency or organization in preparing or submitting an application is the agency or organization's sole responsibility; the funding agency will not reimburse any agency or organization for any pre-award costs incurred.
3. **Elaborate Applications**

Elaborate applications in the form of brochures or other presentations beyond what is necessary to present a complete and effective application are not desired.
4. **Oral Explanations**

The funding agency will not be bound by oral explanations or instructions given at any time during the competitive process or after awarding the grant.
5. **Reference to Other Data**

Only information that is received in response to this RFA will be evaluated; reference to information previously submitted will not be considered.
6. **Titles**

Titles and headings in this RFA are for convenience only and shall have no binding force or effect.
7. **Form of Application**

Each application must be submitted utilizing the forms provided by DCDEE, and upon

award, these forms will be incorporated into the funding agency's Performance Agreement (contract).

8. Exceptions

All applications are subject to the terms and conditions outlined herein. All responses will be controlled by such terms and conditions. The attachment of other terms and conditions by any agency or organization may be grounds for rejection of that agency or organization's application.

9. Advertising

In submitting its application, the agency or organization agrees not to use the results of the selection process as part of any news release or commercial advertising without prior written approval of DCDEE.

10. Right to Submitted Material

All responses, inquiries, or correspondence relating to or in reference to the RFA, and all other reports, charts, displays, schedules, exhibits, and other documentation submitted by the agency or organization will become the property of the funding agency when received.

11. Competitive Offer

Pursuant to the provision of N.C.G.S. 143-54, and under penalty of perjury, the signer of any application submitted in response to this RFA thereby certifies that this application has not been arrived at collusively or otherwise in violation of either Federal or North Carolina antitrust laws.

12. Agency and Organization's Representative

Each agency or organization shall submit with its application the name, address, and telephone number of the person(s) with authority to bind the agency or organization and answer questions regarding the application.

13. Subcontracting

Each agency or organization may propose to subcontract portions of work provided that the application clearly indicates the scope of the work to be subcontracted, and to whom.

14. Proprietary Information

Trade secrets or similar proprietary data which the agency or organization does not wish disclosed to other than personnel involved in the evaluation will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by NCAC TO1: 05B.1501 and G.S. 132-1.3 if identified as follows: Each page shall be identified in boldface at the top and bottom as "CONFIDENTIAL." Any section of the application that is to remain confidential shall also be so marked in boldface on the title page of that section.

15. Participation Encouraged

Pursuant to Article 3 and 3C, Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes and

Executive Order No. 77, the funding agency invites and encourages participation in this RFA by businesses owned by minorities, women, and the disabled including utilization as subcontractor(s) to perform functions under this Request for Application.

16. Gifts Ban

N.C.G.S. 133-32 and Executive Order 24 prohibit the offer to or acceptance by any State Employee of any gift from anyone with a contract with the State, or from any person seeking to do business with the State. By execution of any response to this request, agencies and organizations attest, for the entire organization and its employees or agents, that no such gift has been offered, accepted, or promised by any employees of the organization.

17. Contract/Funds Disbursement

DCDEE will issue a contract to the recipient of the grant that will include the application. Expenditures may begin upon receipt of a fully executed contract and not before that point. To receive compensation, following contract submission and agreement, the selected applicant must submit a monthly reimbursement request to the Division for all expenses incurred.

18. Audit

Please be advised that the successful applicant may be required to have an audit in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143C-6-22 and N.C.G.S. 143C-6-23 as applicable to the agency's status.

There are 3 reporting levels which are determined by the total direct grant receipts from all State agencies in the entity's fiscal year:

Level 1: Less than \$25,000

Level 2: At least \$25,000 but less than \$500,000

Level 3: \$500,000 or more. Level 3 grantees are required to submit a "Yellow Book" audit done by a CPA.

Only Level 3 grantees may include audit expenses on the budget. Audit expenses should be prorated based on the ratio of the grant to the total pass-through funds received by the entity.

19. Additional Documentation to Include with Application

All applicants are required to include documentation of their tax identification number. Those applicants which are private nonprofit agencies are to include a copy of an IRS determination letter regarding the agency's 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. (This letter normally includes the agency's tax identification number, so it would also satisfy that documentation requirement.)

20. Federal Certifications

Agencies or organizations receiving federal funds are required to execute Federal certifications regarding non-discrimination, Drug-Free Workplace, Environmental Tobacco Smoke, Debarment, Lobbying, and Lobbying Activities.

21. System for Award Management Database (SAM)

All grantees receiving federal funds must be actively registered in the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) database, or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the award (see www.sam.gov). To maintain an active SAM record, the record must be updated no less than annually.

22. Additional Documentation Prior to Contract Execution

Contracts will require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:

- a. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign contracts.
- b. A completed and signed letter from the agency's Board President/Chairperson identifying individuals authorized to sign expenditure reports.
- c. Documentation of the agency's DUNS number. Documentation consists of a copy of communication (such as a letter or email correspondence) from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) which indicates the agency or organization's legal name, address, and DUNS number. In lieu of a document from D&B, a copy of the agency or organization's SAM record is acceptable.
- d. If your agency does not have a DUNS number, please use the D&B online registration (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) to receive one free of charge. (DUNS is the acronym for the Data Universal Numbering System developed and regulated by D&B.)
- e. Contracts with private non-profit agencies require additional documentation prior to contract execution. After the award announcement, private non-profit agencies will be contacted about providing the following documentation:
 - i. A completed, signed, and notarized statement which includes the agency's Conflict of Interest Policy.
 - ii. A completed, signed, and notarized page certifying that the agency has no overdue tax debts.
- f. All grantees receiving funds through the State of North Carolina are required to execute Contractor Certifications Required by North Carolina Law. Contractor Certifications should **NOT** be generated, signed or returned with application.

Note: At the start of each calendar year, all agencies with current DCDEE contracts are required to update their contract documentation. These agencies will be contacted a few weeks prior to the due date and will be provided the necessary forms and instructions.

23. Registration with Secretary of State

Private non-profit applicants must also be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State to do business in North Carolina or be willing to complete the registration process in conjunction with the execution of the contract documents. (See www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations.)

24. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement

The Contractor shall complete and submit to the Division, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Data Reporting Requirement form within 10 State Business Days when awarded \$25,000 or more in federal funds.

25. Salary Limitation

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018, (Division H, Title II, Sec. 202), limits the salary amount that may be awarded and charged to ACF grants and cooperative agreements. Award funds issued under this announcement may not be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II. The Executive Level II salary of the "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" is \$189,600. This amount reflects an individual's base salary exclusive of fringe benefits and any income that an individual may be permitted to earn outside of the duties of the applicant organization. This salary limitation also applies to subawards and subcontracts under an ACF grant or cooperative agreement.

XI. APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The following items must be included in the application. Please assemble the application in the following order in the format identified in Section VII on page 9:

- ☐ Application Checklist – Item 1
- ☐ Application Face Sheet – Item 2
- ☐ Proposal Summary/Design/Evaluation Plan – Item 3
- ☐ List of Subcontractors – Item 4
- ☐ Line Item Budget & FTE Worksheet – Item 5
- ☐ Indirect Cost Rate Approval Letter (if applicable)
- ☐ Letters of Commitment or Statements of Support – Item 6
- ☐ IRS Tax Status Documentation – Item 7
 - a. IRS letter documenting your organization's tax identification number
 - OR
 - b. IRS determination letter regarding your organization's 501(c)(3) tax exempt status for private nonprofits